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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 010846

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TAGS: [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: DEMOBILIZATION TO RESUME; TIMETABLE UNDER
NEGOTIATION

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood.
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) The GOC and AUC negotiators have agreed to extend the December 31 deadline for the remaining demobilizations of approximately 10,000 paramilitaries for an additional period, expected to be no more than 60 days. Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo has reiterated that the new deadline must be "credible and acceptable" to the country. The groups that remain to demobilize include 3,000 from the North Bloc and some 7,000 from blocs "independent" of the AUC, such as the Central Bolivar Bloc (BCB). End Summary.

DEMOBILIZATIONS TO RESUME

¶2. (C) On November 16, the GOC and AUC announced that they had reached agreement to resume demobilizations, suspended since early October. According to Minister of Interior and Justice Sabas Pretelt, the GOC expects the December 31 deadline to be extended by a short period. In a radio interview November 17, Pretelt said demobilizations should not extend beyond January. (Note: we understand that Uribe has an informal deadline of the end of February; any delay beyond that could have negative consequences for security requirements associated with the March congressional elections.) Pretelt also said paramilitaries had agreed to refrain from political activities in the upcoming congressional and presidential campaigns. He emphasized that extraditions would continue and that there would be no GOC deals with paramilitaries on extradition.

MOST RECENT DEMOBILIZATIONS

¶3. (SBU) Since late August, four paramilitary blocs have demobilized, bringing the total number of demobilized paramilitaries to 11,117. In September, three groups demobilized: the 1,135 members of "Los Leales Front" of the Centauros Bloc in Casanare Department; 222 members from the North-West Antioqueno Bloc in Antioquia Department; and 325

members of the Central Bolivar Bloc (BCB) in Vichada Department. The only commander to demobilize with his group in September was North-West Antioqueno Bloc leader Luis Arnulfo Turbequia, AKA "Memin." The other blocs were under the control of AUC leader and Centauros Bloc commander Vicente Castano and BCB leader Carlos Mario Jimenez, AKA "Macaco."

¶4. (SBU) In October, the dissident Tolima Bloc demobilized its 207 members in Tolima Department despite the suspension of demobilization activities announced earlier in the month by AUC negotiators to protest AUC leader Diego Murillo's, AKA "Don Berna," transfer to a maximum-security prison. According to a delegate from the Peace Commissioner's Office, Tolima Bloc chief Diego Jose Martinez, AKA "Daniel," negotiated independently with the GOC for the demobilization of his bloc and demobilized along with it. (Note: According to official sources, the Tolima Bloc had financed itself with extortion of farmers, cattlemen and merchants, and theft of gasoline from the Puerto Salgar-Gualanday-Neiva pipeline.)

PARAMILITARY GROUPS LEFT TO DEMOBILIZE

¶5. (C) Approximately 10,000 paramilitaries remain to demobilize -- 3,000 from the North Bloc and about 7,000 from the BCB and other blocs that are "independent" of the AUC structure. In an interview with Cambio magazine on November 7, AUC and BCB political chief Ivan Roberto Duque, AKA "Ernesto Baez," said the groups that remain are the most militarily powerful blocs within the organization. (Note: The BCB, which is independent from the AUC, is estimated to have

over 25 fronts and 6,000 to 9,000 members left. Other independent groups are the Elmer Cardenas Bloc with 500 members, the Mineros Bloc with 2,000 members, the Self-Defense Mid-Magdalena Bloc, and the two remaining fronts from the Centauros Bloc.)

OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

¶6. (C) Security and Democracy Foundation (FSD) Director Alfredo Rangel said paramilitaries have been concerned about the following issues: refusal to exempt paramilitary leaders from extradition; the GOC's "failure to fully implement the Justice and Peace (J&P) law"; inability of the government to reclaim control of the areas vacated by the paramilitaries; uncertainty surrounding the issue of the centers where they will serve their sentences; the inefficiency of the reinsertion programs; and the absence of opportunities for the demobilized combatants. Rangel claims the GOC's position has also been hardening, primarily as a result of accusations of paramilitary interference in politics; the death of a neighbor of President Uribe at the hands of reinserted combatants; pressure from the USG for extradition; and annoyance at the suspension of demobilizations. On November 9, Baez asserted in a RCN television interview that the only thing to keep demobilized combatants from returning to "the backcountry" in the face of the government's failure to make good on its commitments would be "for example, the setting of limitations on the extradition issue."

¶7. (C) According to FSD researcher Juan Carlos Garzon, the remaining blocs will be the hardest for the GOC to process because their ties to narcotrafficking give them little incentive to demobilize. RCN journalist Alfredo Bustillo, who follows the peace process and has covered the paramilitary phenomenon for several years, told poloff that BCB leader Macaco would rather demobilize at a later date, since he wants to guarantee greater narco-profits for his subordinates. Cambio magazine on November 7 noted the paramilitary groups that are showing the greatest reluctance to demobilize are those that operate in areas with significant drug production. In contrast, the groups that laid down their arms worked primarily in areas where there

was little or no drug production. The Cambio article concluded that the demobilizations so far have been a political move on the part of paramilitary leaders to convince the public that they support Uribe's peace process.

COMMENT

18. (C) According to officials from the Peace Commissioner's Office, the GOC does not have the resources or the logistical capacity to accommodate two or three demobilizations simultaneously over the next months. Nevertheless, Uribe is determined to ensure the maximum demobilizations possible to free up logistical and security resources for the March Congressional campaign, and to run for reelection in May without this matter hanging over his head. The remaining paramilitary blocs appear to be united only insofar as they fear extradition.

DRUCKER